



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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GOVERNOR RECOGNIZES EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS *MAY 12 PROCLAIMED CHILD CARE PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— Governor Phil Bredesen has proclaimed Friday, May 12 “Child Care Provider Appreciation Day” to recognize the important work that these teachers and caregivers do for young children across Tennessee every day. Good child care is an important step to school success. Studies show that children who receive quality child care enter school with better math, language, and social skills. And most American families are using child care — more than 75 percent of children under five are in some type of child care.

“Children must be in healthy and safe child care settings, but the most important factor for positive early learning experiences is the interaction between caregiver and child,” said Governor Bredesen. “Thousands of providers offer quality care to our pre-school and school-age children every day. For that, they must be commended and recognized.”

“High quality child care should be accessible to all parents who need this service,” said Tennessee Department of Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. “Quality child care enhances the physical, social and intellectual development of children. And parents and employers benefit when parents know their children are in a safe, caring and stimulating environment during the work day.”

More than 3,500 child care centers, group homes and family homes across the state are licensed by DHS, and there are more than 300,000 spaces available for children in licensed pre-school and after-school care.

The Department also administers the Star Quality Program, which recognizes providers who meet or exceed the minimum licensing standards. More than 65 percent of child care providers licensed by DHS have earned a Star rating. Of these, more than half have achieved a 3-Star rating.

To foster higher quality child care, DHS offers training and technical assistance for all providers through the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) and through a network of Child Care Resource and Referral Centers (CCR&R’s). The CCR&R’s are also a valuable resource for parents who are looking to find the best care for their children.

Provider Appreciation Day began in 1996 and takes place the Friday before Mother’s Day. It is celebrated in all 50 states.

For more information on DHS Child Care Programs visit: www.state.tn.us/humanserv/childcare.htm

***Photo available upon request.

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